

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Please Cancel Claims 2 and 25 without prejudice.

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

1 (canceled).

2 (canceled).

3 (canceled).

- 1 4 (previously presented). A method for producing a cleaned-up digital image of a
2 document including essential data images and undesired noise images, comprising:
3 (a) digitally scanning the document to produce a first digital representation of

4 the data images and the noise images;

5 (b) performing a first object grabbing operation on the first digital
6 representation to identify all object images thereof;

7 (c) determining a skew angle of a straight line having a predetermined
8 relationship to some objects representative of the essential data images and de-skewing the
9 document by rotating the first digital representation by an amount equal to the magnitude of the
10 skew angle to provide a de-skewed first digital representation;

11 (d) performing a second object grabbing operation on the de-skewed first
12 digital representation to create an object list of all object images of the de-skewed first digital
13 representation;

14 (e) identifying a portion of the de-skewed first digital representation
15 corresponding to a picture region of the document;

16 (f) producing a reduced-resolution representation of the de-skewed first
17 digital representation and performing a second object grabbing operation on the reduced-
18 resolution representation;

19 (g) identifying objects of the reduced-resolution representation representing

20 essential data areas of the document; and

21 (h) constructing the cleaned-up digital image of the document by performing
22 a logical ANDing operation between the picture region and the data areas with the de-skewed
23 first digital representation to eliminate all objects outside of the picture region and the data areas
24 to provide the cleaned-up digital image.

1 5 (previously presented). A method for producing a cleaned-up digital image of a
2 document including essential data images and undesired noise images, comprising:

3 (a) digitally scanning the document to produce a first digital representation of
4 the data images and the noise images;

5 (b) performing a first object grabbing operation on the first digital
6 representation to identify all object images thereof;

7 (c) determining a skew angle of a straight line having a predetermined
8 relationship to some objects representative of the essential data images and de-skewing the
9 document by rotating the first digital representation by an amount equal to the magnitude of the
10 skew angle to provide a de-skewed first digital representation;

11 (d) performing a second object grabbing operation on the de-skewed first
12 digital representation to create an object list of all object images of the de-skewed first digital
13 representation;

14 (e) identifying a portion of the de-skewed first digital representation
15 corresponding to a picture region of the document;

16 (f) identifying objects representing essential data images of the document and
17 marking the identified objects as data objects; and

18 (g) constructing the cleaned-up digital image of the document by

19 i. combining the objects in the picture region and the marked data
20 objects, and

21 ii. eliminating all objects not marked as data objects to provide a
22 reconstructed digital representation of the essential images without the noise images.

1 6 (previously presented). The method of Claim 5 including performing the first
2 object grabbing operation by obtaining serial runlength data from the first digital representation

3 including slices that each include the length and ending pixel number of a string of connected
4 pixels having a "1" value, operating line-by-line on the runlength data by means of a decision
5 tree classifier that creates software objects including a first linked list of a number of further
6 linked lists each of which contains all of the slices of an object image, entering the slices of the
7 object image into a software frame in the same order in which the slices are scanned,
8 determining if the object image can be represented as a trapezoid or as an irregular blob
9 containing all of its slices, fitting the data in the software frame representing the object image
10 into a decision tree classifier, and operating the classifier to recognize and assign identifiers to
11 divergences, convergences, and open ends of the object image and create a new linked list of
12 linked lists representing the object image in the form of blob records, trapezoid records,
13 divergence records, and convergence records which then can be conveniently used in subsequent
14 vectorization operations without the need to scan and recognize data representing the object
15 image.

1 7 (previously presented). The method of Claim 6 including performing the second
2 object grabbing operation by performing steps which are essentially similar to the steps of the
3 first object grabbing operation.

1 8 (previously presented). The method of Claim 5 wherein in step (c) the line has the
2 predetermined relationship to a plurality of text objects in a row of text objects.

1 9 (previously presented). The method of Claim 8 wherein some of the text objects
2 are centered about the line.

1 10 (previously presented). The method of Claim 8 including building the row of text
2 objects by successively adding any closest nearby text object to either end of a row initially
3 including a first text object.

1 11 (previously presented). The method of Claim 6 wherein in step (c) the line has the
2 predetermined relationship to a plurality of geometric objects identified by vectorizing objects
3 larger than a predetermined size, identifying near-horizontal lines and near-vertical lines of the
4 vectorized objects, and selecting a value of the skew angle which minimizes the mean-square
5 deviation of the near-horizontal and near-vertical lines from orthogonality.

1 12 (previously presented). The method of Claim 5 including, after step (b), classifying
2 at least a portion of the document as a type including mainly text objects or mainly geometric
3 objects by producing a first reduced-resolution representation of the first digital representation
4 and performing another object grabbing operation on the first reduced-resolution representation
5 to identify objects of the first reduced-resolution representation, determining the numbers of
6 text-character-shaped rectangular objects and geometric objects thereof, respectively, and
7 classifying the document as text type if the number of text-character-shaped objects is greater
8 than the number of geometric objects, and otherwise classifying the document as geometric type.

1 13 (previously presented). The method of Claim 5 wherein step (f) includes forming a
2 row of text including text objects near to each other and having heights within a predetermined
3 range, and marking all object images produced according to step (b) within the row as data
4 objects.

1 14 (previously presented). The method of Claim 13 including identifying the object
2 images which are geometric objects and marking them as data objects.

1 15 (previously presented). The method of claim 14 wherein the identifying of
2 geometric objects includes identifying only objects which have sufficiently high density and a
3 sufficiently large aspect ratio as geometric objects.

1 16 (previously presented). The method of Claim 14 wherein the identifying of
2 geometric objects includes identifying whole geometric objects by getting a next object image
3 having a size greater than a predetermined text size, and, if the next object image has a density
4 lower than a predetermined density, performing a neural network operation to determine if the
5 next object image is a whole geometry object, and, if the neural network operation determines
6 that the next object image is a whole geometry object, marking the next object image as a data
7 object.

1 17 (previously presented). The method of Claim 14 wherein the identifying of
2 geometric objects includes identifying broken geometry objects by performing a quad tree
3 operation on all object images not previously identified as either text objects or geometric
4 objects to identify a non-marked object, and repeatedly identifying any nearby non-marked
5 objects of similar shape, to attempt to extend a pattern of similar non-marked objects in opposite
6 directions from the non-marked object, and marking all objects included in the pattern as data

7 objects.

1 18 (previously presented). The method of Claim 17 including computing a pattern
2 confidence level, and marking the objects included in the pattern only if the confidence level
3 exceeds a predetermined level.

1 19 (previously presented). The method of claim 14 including identifying any object
2 images which constitute dashed lines or dotted lines and marking such identified object images
3 as data objects, by creating a grid of the wide, short rectangles or a grid of tall, narrow rectangles
4 covering at least a portion of the document, summing the areas of all dash-sized for dot-sized
5 objects into appropriate rectangles, eliminating objects in the appropriate rectangles having
6 sufficiently small area sums, obtaining a histogram all objects in the appropriate rectangles by
7 area and x-coordinate or y-coordinate, and marking each object having a sufficiently large
8 histogram peak and located between predetermined coordinate bounds has a dashed object.

1 20 (previously presented). The method of Claim 5 wherein the producing of the
2 reduced-resolution representation of the de-skewed first digital representation includes
3 representing each tile of four adjacent pixels of the first digital representation as a single pixel
4 and setting the single pixel to a "1" state if any of the four adjacent pixels of the tile is at a "1"
5 state and otherwise setting the single pixel to a "0" state.

1 21 (previously presented). The method of Claim 20 including producing a first
2 reduced-resolution representation of the first digital representation by representing each tile of
3 four adjacent pixels of the reduced-resolution representation as a single pixel and setting that
4 single pixel to a "1" state if any of the four adjacent pixels of that tile is at a "1" state and
5 otherwise setting that single pixel to a "0" state.

1 22 (previously presented). A method for producing a cleaned-up digital image of a
2 document including essential data images and undesired noise images, comprising:

3 (a) digitally scanning the document to produce a first digital representation of
4 the data images and the noise images;

5 (b) operating a processor to perform a first object grabbing operation on the
6 first digital representation to identify all object images thereof;

7 (c) operating the processor to determine a skew angle of a straight line having
8 a predetermined relationship to at least some objects representative of essential data and to de-
9 skew the document by rotating the first digital representation by an amount equal to the
10 magnitude of the skew angle to provide a de-skewed first digital representation;

11 (d) operating the processor to perform a second object grabbing operation on
12 the de-skewed first digital representation to create an object list of all object images of the de-
13 skewed first digital representation;

14 (e) operating the processor so as to identify a portion of the de-skewed first
15 digital representation corresponding to a picture region of the document;

16 (f) operating the processor to produce a reduced-resolution representation of
17 the de-skewed first digital representation and to perform a second object-grabbing operation on
18 the reduced resolution representation;

19 (g) operating the processor to identify objects of the reduced-resolution
20 representation representing essential data areas of the document; and

21 (h) constructing the cleaned-up digital image of the document by operating
22 the processor to perform a logical ANDing operation between the picture region and the data
23 areas with the de-skewed first digital representation to eliminate all objects outside of the picture
24 region and the data areas to provide the cleaned-up digital image.

1 23 (previously presented). A method for producing a cleaned-up digital image of a
2 document including essential data images and undesired noise images, comprising:

3 (a) digitally scanning the document to produce a first digital representation of
4 the data images and the noise images;

5 (b) operating a processing system to perform a first object grabbing operation
6 on the first digital representation to identify all object images thereof;

7 (c) operating the processing system to determine a skew angle of a straight
8 line having a predetermined relationship to at least some objects representative of essential data
9 and to de-skew the document by rotating the first digital representation by an amount equal to
10 the magnitude of the skew angle to provide a de-skewed first digital representation;

11 (d) operating the processing system to perform a second object grabbing

12 operation on the de-skewed first digital representation to create an object list of all object images
13 of the de-skewed first digital representation;

14 (e) operating the processing system so as to identify a portion of the de-
15 skewed first digital representation corresponding to a picture region of the document;

16 (f) operating the processing system to identify objects representing essential
17 data images of the document and mark the identified objects as data objects; and

18 (g) constructing the cleaned-up digital image of the document by operating
19 the processing system to

20 i. combine the objects in the picture region and the marked data
21 objects to provide the cleaned-up digital image, and

22 ii. eliminate all objects not marked as data objects to provide a
23 reconstructed digital representation of the essential images without the noise images.

24 (canceled).

25 (canceled).

26 (canceled).

27 (canceled).